

DRAFT*Renwitten*

18 February 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

THROUGH : Chief, SSS, [] and Mr. Coffey

SUBJECT : Requested Review of the Records Management Board's Current Problems.

1. On 1 July 1968 the Agency Records Center--with a total capacity of 106,800 cubic feet--contained 104,373 cu. ft. of records (67,469 were old, inactive office files). On 11 July Col. White told all the Deputies to appoint officers they trust to get rid of at least half their holdings. The DDP immediately protested that he knew from recent CI Staff actions that this was not possible. On 30 August creation of a Records Management Board was announced as was its responsibility to monitor that "Records Purge" and study records problems and recommend solutions.

2. By the end of December 1968 the Board's efforts had removed 6,779 cubic feet of those July records from the Records Center through destruction and permanent transfers. Problem Number One the Board faces is one of semantics. After its first full quarter it was vigorously underway toward success and felt the tempo was quickening Agency-wide. But the Board members fully realized that 6,310 cubic feet of new accessions at the Records Center reduced the value of their success to a net gain of only 469 cubic feet of useable storage space in the Center. From problem one the Board resented the impatience of those

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GROUP 1:
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

who focused on the net at this stage and ignored their initial effort in this first quarter. They recognize the ultimate goal is more space in the Records Center but are uncertain whether the "50% yardstick" is to be measured against the July total of 104,000 or July inactive Office records of 68,000. Since they are Purging Office records, Vital Records and Supplemental Distribution extra copies they are using the overall total of 104,000.

3. Preparing the October-December 1968 report the Board desperately sought evidence for some projections. No amount of speculation could be accumulated to indicate either success or failure. The members were challenged and reached deep into the component reports and assurances. But, optimists were balanced by pessimists, knowledge of long-time records managers was muted by naive pronouncements of experts in unrelated fields. A multitude of educated guesses by the Board were developed and rejected. The final report said "purging results to date do not provide an adequate base to reliably determine trends or estimate future volume reductions". Problem Number Two is the absence of a time-frame commensurate with the enormity of the job at hand. None was stated at the outset. The Board sought its own time frame in its discussions and some speculated on a 1 July 1969 target date. Other members feel that is not a full year for the purge since the July-October period was primarily a non-productive, organizing effort. The more impatient members insist on definitive findings in the next report. The Board has set for itself a severely challenging objective filled with innumerable variables. The members aim to develop some projections and recommendations during the first quarter of 1969.

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4. Problem Three is the basic premise of the original requirement--
"get rid of half the holdings in the Records Center". After disposal
of thousands of boxes and the returning to the shelves of thousands
more, the Board members are asking if it is correct to assume that the
"fat" in today's stored records will be found to total fifty percent.
At present they are inclined to believe that disposal of twenty-five
percent will be a difficult goal to achieve with the possible removal
of another five percent which might be transferred to other Agencies of
the government. The members explain that when the early requests for
an addition were rejected, [] took three steps to extend the
capacity life of the Center and these have had a definite impact on
volumes in today's records purge:

(a) He conducted a purge which disposed of 55,000 cubic feet
in five years (FY 1963-1967).

(b) A tight control of all deposits was instituted in 1964.
No new deposit is accepted unless its disposition is
scheduled. (Friendships and authorities notwithstanding,
this control has tightened more every year since.)

(c) An annual graduated disposal of Supplemental Distribution
copies was scrupulously implemented and large collections
were transferred to other Government Agencies. (JPRS, etc.)
JPRS's to Commerce.) (1964)

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5. In recent years the central staff and the experienced Records Management Officers in Agency components continue to revise and reduce scheduled retention periods and screen material to reduce the volumes of original deposits. But, there are enough old records and untrained people being assigned the Records Officer title to continue to provide many thousands of boxes of records that should be purged. The possible number of such boxes still available beyond the next 20,000 remains to be seen and is still argued among interested records managers.

6. Problem Four is cost and is related to both the time frame and volumes eliminated. A major effort by the Office of Security file clerks last year recalled 1,200 boxes of old case files for review, purge, and repackaging. They succeeded in reducing the volume by 40%. They spent 3 man-hours per box reviewed. Last month the Inspector General had his Junior Officers review five boxes of his records. They eliminated two and averaged over two man-hours per box reviewed. spent more than five hours on the first box of DCI records he reviewed. The time and cost of reviewing old files is enormous. This cost must be eliminated. For the present the Board is comparing microfilming and reviewing costs and manpower. All members are working on Retention Plans to establish Offices of Record and thus permit greater freedom in disposing of large file collections with shorter, more cursory reviews. For the future such costly reviews can be eliminated by better screening in the depositing Office. The Board has ordered the records deposit form to be revised to compel the File Custodians to "Certify" the records have been properly screened and then for their Records Management Officer to "Certify" he has checked the deposit content and the scheduled retention period.

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7. Problem Five impacts on all purge problems. Only a qualified Records Management Officer can significantly contribute to the control of Office files, reduce the volume in storage, and eliminate these disrupting, expensive periodic crash programs of reviews and purges. We speak here of a grade 12 officer and manager not a busy registry or a file clerk or a grade 7 or 9 who is too intimidated to speak to Division Chiefs or Office Heads of local sins to be cured or of new systems to be tried. In my opinion a good full-time Records Officer can provide annual savings or cost avoidances of three times his salary or he is not qualified.

25X1 8. On 11 July Col. White explained he could not support ☐ new records positions or a Records Career Service at this time but he told the Deputies each Office should have a person assigned whose "Primary Duty" was the Records Management Program. At present every Directorate has a few offices with no Records Officer and many have assigned the title to persons who consider other duties to be their primary responsibility. The Agency records problems impact on office procedures and budgets throughout the life cycle of the papers. Only a total Records Program can improve the efficiency and economy of Agency paperwork operations. A continuing part-time, "patch-quilt" effort will continue the need for disruptive and costly crash programs involving high level officials to undo the results of neglected records management. The problem can be solved only by a Top Management policy decision. Either the problem is important enough to warrant a Program to control it or

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the costs and damage deserve no more than periodic attention.

9. The scope of the Agency records problem is large enough to warrant Top Management's immediate and continuing concern:

- (a) The Agency has 12,000 safes worth 7 million dollars and buys more annually.
- (b) These safes house half the Office records. More are in expensive vaults and specialized file equipment.
- (c) These safes occupy 96,000 square feet of scarce office space which at \$4 per foot costs the government \$384,000 per year.
- (d) Estimates indicate we need 2,500 file clerks to service the Agency Office files.

A Records Management Officer works full time to reduce all of these as well as several other paperwork problems.

10. The Board finds that the progress of the current purge directly reflects the degree of interest expressed by Top Management from the outset. Similarly the records officer problem and its attendant benefits or neglect can be solved only by an expression of Top Management concern. Today's purge cannot be fully implemented nor can the Program to preclude future purges be successful without manpower specifically assigned to the task. The records manager title, position, and Program are understood in every component. The problem is compounded by the fact that existing assignments are abused. To solve this personnel problem it will suffice for the present to have an announcement from Col. White

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reiterating his concern ~~for~~ the Records Program and the File Purge and insisting that every Office must have a qualified Records Management Officer whose "Primary Duty" is the Records Program. The Directorate representatives thru the Board and O/Personnel can develop and circulate uniform qualification standards for each area.

11. Problem Six concerns the Directorate Representatives on the Board. At the July meeting Col. White asked each Deputy to appoint someone to represent him on the Records Management Board. It was to be some officer that could speak for the Deputy and work on the Board full time. The DDS&T immediately instied that this should not necessarily mean a GS-17. He had someone who was quite familiar with records and could be on that Board. He assigned the GS-11 who operates his Registry. The entire Board remained unorganized for a month after the meeting because there was no DCI member. The DDI member has 6 months of records Program experience and the DCI member has none. The DDP representative has been absent several times to conduct training sessions. The DDS member divides his time between the Board and his many duties on the Central Records Staff. The Chairman with no deputy supervises a fully occupied staff of ☐ operating the Agency Records Program and deals with some 65 part time RMO's across the Agency. The Central Staff has contributed the extended services of eight people to the Board while other offices, although busy with the Purge, have supplied only a substitute to attend an occassional Board meeting.

12. I believe the Directorate loyalties often expressed at Board meetings these past few months should not yet be used to judge the members' eventual behavior. To date we have not been required to test

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25X1 anyone on an Agencywide policy which challenged a Directorate position. All have freely stated they feel there is no conflict in Directorate records goals and Agency Program goals. Their reaction to outside review, such as by [] naturally stimulated expressions of some objection from each of them concerning the authority of the Records Center Chief to veto a disposal request. No one objects to the procedure of a final review by the CIA Records Officer prior to the furnace. I believe the procedure is good management as is the next step providing for reference to the next management echelon any differences of opinion developing from the findings and recommendations of the final review. If the designated reviewer and the Office Records Officer cannot agree on the results of the review and proposed action the difference should be reconciled by the Directorate ^{RNC} concerned and myself as supervisor of the reviewer who is also the Records Center Chief. Mr. [] 25X1 from the Office of General Council was asked by the Board to examine the legal implications of this procedure. You may wish to discuss the matter with him. If you feel the other Deputies will have no objection to this procedure we will continue the reviews. I believe a formal announcement would be helpful but not absolutely necessary since the reviews are a practice of long standing.

13. As Problem seven the Board sees five specific problems related to office activities which deserve some intervention by Top Management. These are not yet crystalized with alternatives or recommendations. At present the Board is endeavoring to stimulate interest in these several area. Comment by you or Col. White on any of these topics would

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certainly generate prompt support and positive action in the areas concerned:

- (a) The Director, NPIC/DDI should seriously review his plans for emergency relocation either with the Agency or the Air Force and then locate his emergency Vital Records and related equipment accordingly. A survey of this problem was completed by the NPIC Records Officer and sent to him two months ago.
- (b) The Agency Emergency Relocation Plan should be re-examined and up-dated. This time, related Vital Records Plans should be studied simultaneously. Similarly related emergency equipment requirements for computer tapes and maps or other products should be reviewed by the Emergency Planning Officer and his planning committee.
- (c) Independent of the above reviews, the Vital Records now stored and those scheduled for storage should be more seriously examined by the responsible components to insure their retention of only essential material. The 8,000 cubic feet of Vital Records in storage should include only emergency program material ~~for~~ those components scheduled for emergency relocation. Some offices use this storage as backup in case of procedural accidents because it takes less work and justification to get a deposit in. Finally

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a policy decision is needed concerning the duplication of material stored in the Vital Records collection and in the inactive Office Files stored in the Records Center.

- (d) All Directorates are diligently studying microfilming applications. Separate new plans now involve: the Polygraph Case Files, certain types of Medical Files, NIS Gazzeteers, Cables, and others. The Printing Services Division, DDS is responsible for filming upon request, The Office of Computer Services, DDS&T provides assistance on equipment, and the Office of Research and Development, DDS&T is reviewing current developments in the field as is my staff. CRS/DDI and RID/DDP have large independent filming operations. We have 90,000 reels of film stored in the Records Center. My staff has no manpower or expertise available today to attempt any control of micro-film applications and the Board members discourage any inclination for such control. Independent microfilming applications today are where independent computer planning was ten years ago. Film plans will increase in the next two years but in five years new expensive techniques will cause today's efforts to be revised and probably re-done. Today's effort is developing a personnel competence in filming and new office procedures to fit the medium. In the future these will be the experts in the probable "Office of Miniaturized Data." But there are some who see today's costly duplication of research and independent developments

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in each Directorate as wasteful. If nothing more, at the very least there is need for a formal study by an ad hoc committee of the coming microminiaturization world and to propose Agency development in the field.

- (e) With regard to the Purge, I find that the 38,000 cu. ft. of "Indefinite" records on deposit in the Records Center have no disposal dates. Offices rebuff any challenge we make of these records by stating they do have established "Review Dates." Unfortunately, the Records Center experience shows that most "Reviews" consist of someone in an Office reading the deposit form, exclaiming "These files were before my time and I know nothing about them nor what to do with them," Then he requests moving the date up for another "Review" cycle. Thus the deposits remain and they are further than ever from any final decision. Future officers will know even less about them and if an event stimulates a need few are sufficiently indexed or organized for new people to exploit them effectively. All the current Purge Officers should be notified that at the next "review date" a decision must be made and every "Indefinite" deposit given a specific disposal date. We have been trying for years to get such a pronouncement. Unfortunately, the response we repeatedly get from Records Officers and Division chiefs is that a decision cannot be made because of the intangibles involved. We are not asking that the records be destroyed now, only that a

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decision be made now. Any deposit seriously in need of subsequent "review" can be scheduled for return to the depositing office on a specified date for its disposal after a review. The prospect or experience of hundreds of boxes arriving in those offices will quickly prompt establishing a definite disposal date.

14. The foregoing seven problems may be summarized as follows:


1. Semantics of Purge requirements.
2. Time frame of Purge and Proposals.
3. Fifty percent premise vs. 30% expectation.
4. Record review costs and time.
5. Qualified Records Managers with clarified Primary Duty.
6. Over-extended Board Members.
7. Office activities being considered:
 - a. NPIC Emergency Planning
 - b. Agency Emergency Planning
 - c. Reduction of Vital Records
 - d. Microfilming Study Committee
 - e. Eliminate Indefinite Disposition and Reviews

The first four propose no action by you unless you wish to alter the assumptions being used by the Board and are intended to provide you with background for your discussions with Col. White and the Deputies. Item five needs Top support and if you agree the Board will develop the implementing correspondence you request. In number six I have no proposal concerning the Board membership. The Office Activities require an expression of intent and interest from you and Col. White and the Board

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and my staff and the Records Center with act accordingly.

15. The active support of the Records Program by you and Col. White has stirred up enormous activity and surfaced many problems and inconveniences. This blinding spotlight is new for the Program, but we can still see many compensating benefits to the Agency and continuation was the last request of the Board meeting yesterday.


Chairman
Records Management Board

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